

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

July 30, 2013

Bringing Early Childhood Education Expertise to the First 5 LA Commission

The First 5 LA Commission (Commission) is tasked with rendering complex policy decisions, aligned with the current strategic plan, that guide a range of investments associated with the mission of the Commission to strengthen families and community by increasing the number of children ages zero to five who are physically and emotionally healthy, safe from harm, and ready to learn. Both the Commission and its staff are comprised of individuals with expertise in public health, mental health, social work, and other related fields whose knowledge base and experiences reflect the mission of the Commission. However, the Commission currently lacks a voting member with early education expertise.

The centrality and interconnectedness of early childhood education to achieving the overall mission of the Commission is well documented. Research emphasizes that brain development and learning begin prior to birth and consequently has an explicit nexus to the maturation and long-term life outcomes of children. State and federal

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MOTION

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partners are increasingly recognizing the value of early childhood education. For example, the Obama Administration has recently proposed a ten-year, \$75 billion initiative to support grants for states to implement high-quality preschool programs that are aligned with elementary and secondary systems. The Commission should include a pedagogical expert as it begins to consider a range of programmatic opportunities and strategic investments in this domain.

From 1998 through 2012, the Commission included an early childhood education expert who served as a voting member of the Commission and was appointed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). LACOE is one of the largest Head Start grantees in the nation as well as an important Commission partner in the development of a high-quality early care education workforce. A prior change in the status of the Commission's sole expert in pedagogy from voting membership to ex-officio non-voting status membership precludes participation in core decisions which fundamentally impact early childhood education.

The Board of Supervisors has an interest in ensuring that the Commission appointees address the breadth of expertise needed to accomplish the Commission's mission. Early childhood education constituted nearly 60% of First 5 LA's grant-making between FY 09-12 with the majority of funding going to support universal preschool. Moreover, the zero to five year old population is projected to substantially shrink over the next decades. As they grow up, it is more important than ever that these children have access to high-quality early childhood education programs given their increasingly

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critical role in Los Angeles County's future economy. Accordingly, the LACOE appointee's role as a voting member adds value to the Commission and should be restored. Additionally, a rotation schedule should be implemented to allow the four Los Angeles County agencies (Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Department of Public Health and Department of Mental Health), through their respective appointees, to have an equitable opportunity to serve as voting members.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct County Counsel to draft an ordinance amending the Los Angeles County Code, Title 3, Chapter 3.72 – Los Angeles County Children and Families First - Proposition 10 Commission to:

- a) Include the Superintendent of Schools for the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) as a voting member of the First 5 LA Commission;
- b) Set forth a plan that requires appointees of the four Los Angeles County agencies represented on the First 5 LA Commission to annually rotate with only three voting seats filled by a County agency at any one time in the following sequence: (1) Los Angeles County Office of Education, (2) Department of Children and Family Services, (3) Department of Public Health, and (4) Department of Mental Health; and
- c) Report back in writing in 30 days.

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